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Chairman: Mr. Al-Hinai ..... (Oman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 119: Human rights questions (*continued*) (A/56/36 and Add.1, A/56/118; A/C.3/56/3)

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments (*continued*) (A/56/3 (Supplement No. 3), A/56/40 (Supplement, vols. I and II and Add.1), A/56/44 (Supplement), A/56/156, 177, 178, 179, 181, 205, 212, 603)

1. **Ms. Stevens** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, reaffirmed the commitment of the European Union to the primacy of law and its determination to promote democracy and respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Regardless of differences in culture, social background, state of development or geographical region, human rights were inalienable rights of every person. Governments should not invoke the principle of national sovereignty as a means of absolving themselves from their human rights obligations. Human rights were universal and indivisible and the exercise of economic, social and cultural rights could not be a precondition for the application of civil and political rights. It must be recognized that human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and development complemented each other and that respect for human rights contributed to peace and security. The European Union welcomed the fact that a number of delegations had responded to the appeal by the Secretary-General that they sign and ratify the instruments to which their countries were not yet parties. It appealed to States not to falter in their efforts in that regard.

2. Ratification of instruments, the second decisive step towards their application, was not enough. Those instruments must be implemented in practice at the national level, and each government must take all necessary steps to that end. The European Union deplored the large number of reservations to human rights treaties and reminded all States of their obligation not to make reservations that were incompatible with the object and purpose of such instruments. European Union member States regularly reviewed the acceptability of reservations and, in certain instances, had felt it necessary to raise objections to them. They also kept their own reservations under review with the aim of withdrawing them, and urged other States to follow suit.

3. The European Union campaigned against the death penalty because it was convinced that the abolition of the death penalty contributed to the strengthening of respect for human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights. It welcomed the recent signatures and ratifications of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and called on all States parties to the Covenant to consider ratifying the protocol as soon as possible. It was deeply concerned at the fact that the death penalty was often applied in flagrant breach of international standards. It requested the governments of all States in which the death penalty had not yet been abolished to fulfil their obligations under the relevant provisions of international human rights instruments, taking into account the Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 1984. It welcomed the fact that many countries which still retained the death penalty in their criminal law were applying a moratorium on executions, and urged all States which had not yet abolished capital punishment progressively to reduce the number of offences subject to the death penalty and to ensure that it was imposed only for the most serious crimes.

4. The European Union applauded the adoption of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It also welcomed the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and urged all States to accede to it. It noted the recent appointment by the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights of an independent expert to examine the question of a draft optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It supported the working group entrusted with drafting an optional protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and trusted that the group's work would lead rapidly to a definitive text that had real impact.

5. The European Union acknowledged that, for many States, compliance with their obligations under

human rights treaties represented a heavy burden. Nevertheless, it called on all States to submit their reports to the committees designated under the various conventions within the prescribed deadlines. It was also concerned that the committees were examining reports with considerable delay and believed that the treaty-monitoring mechanisms must be given adequate human and financial resources. Coordination among the various human rights structures of the United Nations was vital, as was the consideration of ways of improving the functioning of the overall system. The member States of the European Union reaffirmed their support for the United Nations human rights mechanisms. They reiterated their commitment to comply fully with their obligations in that regard and called on other States to do likewise.

6. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia) said that one of the hallmark achievements of the past century had been the progress made in the area of human rights as a result of the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a set of important international human rights instruments. Member States had an important role to play in the promotion and protection of human rights by upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by speedily ratifying other international human rights instruments with a view to implementing them at the national level. His country was a party to 30 international human rights instruments and had signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which it was in the process of ratifying. It had also become a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment and was about to sign the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

7. With regard to the effective implementation of human rights instruments, the democratic reforms begun in Mongolia in the 1990s had led to an intensive process of legislative change with a view to harmonizing national law with international standards. The adoption of a new Constitution in 1992 was noteworthy in that it had broadened the scope of human rights protection and had established the principle of the equal rights of all human beings. Furthermore, article 10 of the Constitution provided that all the provisions of the treaties to which Mongolia was a party would, once ratified, be equally binding within the country.

8. His Government's commitment to human rights was further embodied in a number of action plans adopted as a follow-up to recent world conferences and summits, the most recent being the national programme on good governance for human security. A National Commission for Human Rights had also been established to monitor the human rights situation, disseminate information and provide a means of recourse for citizens. In May 2001, the Government had launched a national human rights action plan in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations. The main purpose of the plan was to establish a comprehensive human rights protection mechanism and improve national capacity and also to develop regional cooperation in that field. His delegation welcomed the significant strengthening of the technical cooperation programmes of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In Mongolia, the Government was implementing one such programme with the Office in the following areas: establishment of a national human rights institution, promotion of human rights education, prison reform, training of legal practitioners and criminal justice personnel with an emphasis on the implementation of international human rights standards, and provision of expert advice in legislative drafting, revision and implementation.

9. **Mr. Khrystych** (Ukraine) said that his delegation strongly supported the activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights aimed at achieving universal ratification of the six main human rights treaties by the year 2003, as a first step towards strict observance of internationally recognized standards at the national level.

10. Ukraine had ratified all the basic human rights instruments and its parliamentary Ombudsman and Constitutional Court ensured the observance of human rights. Furthermore, the Constitution guaranteed the right of every person to appeal to the relevant international institutions for protection of his or her rights. A number of decrees had also been issued and provisions included in the new Criminal Code with a view to ensuring the freedom and independence of the media.

11. The harmonization of national legislation with international human rights standards was only a starting point, however. Those standards must be applied in everyday life and respect for human dignity

must determine the conduct of the different political and social actors.

12. His delegation hoped that future assessments of the human rights situation in Ukraine, particularly reports of the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights, would be more realistic and less superficial. It recognized the importance of the assistance provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights through its technical cooperation programme, especially in the sphere of administration of justice, and looked forward to the early implementation in Ukraine of the Human Rights Strengthening Programme and the programme of cooperation between the Office and the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

13. Turning to the United Nations treaty bodies, he noted that the periodic reports of States parties, which frequently consisted of nothing more than a summary of legislation, were often submitted years later. Moreover, because of their excessive workload, the treaty bodies were not always able to give sufficient attention to the specific features of the human rights policy adopted by each individual country. He welcomed the efforts of those bodies and the Secretary-General to rationalize reporting procedures and make them more transparent. Duplication of reporting must be avoided, without impairing the quality of reports, and the reporting burden on State parties must be reduced.

14. There should also be closer coordination among the various treaty bodies and, in particular, with the Council of Europe, in order to facilitate the harmonization of monitoring procedures and give more attention to regions where appropriate monitoring structures still did not exist.

15. **Mr. Al-Ethary** (Yemen) stressed the universality and indivisibility of human rights, the exercise of which contributed greatly to improving the living conditions of humankind as a whole. His Government had worked tirelessly to protect human rights through the adoption of appropriate laws and the establishment of a national commission. That approach reflected its commitment to the democracy, which it intended to strengthen through a multiparty system, freedom of the press and respect for individual freedoms. Development and human rights were linked and complementary, for human rights could not be exercised effectively in a context characterized by poverty, disease, hunger and the impossibility of living in dignity.

16. He reiterated his delegation's unwavering commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and noted that Yemen had suffered greatly from the impact of terrorism on its economy and its population. It should, however, be recognized that the campaign against terrorism entailed a risk of human rights violations in some countries. Respect for human rights must therefore guide all anti-terrorist action. Armed conflict provided fertile ground for grave human rights violations, with women and children often being the victims of the blind use of force and reprisals by warring parties. His Government had always condemned the selective use of human rights and the application of a double standard in establishing criteria for human rights and their implementation. The international community must act justly in response to violations of peoples' rights, particularly when children were killed in the streets, citizens were evicted from their homes and houses were destroyed.

17. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein) said that universal ratification of all six core human rights treaties remained an important goal, particularly with regard to those conventions for which target dates for universal ratification had not been met. Liechtenstein was a party to those treaties and had accepted all the procedures for individual communications provided for under the relevant treaties. It had also recently deposited its instrument of ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had signed the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

18. The legal framework which the United Nations had built in the area of human rights was impressive, but there was a gap between the agreed standards and their implementation, in part because of the reservations which States parties had made to some instruments. Reservations, while legitimate and useful for facilitating the ratification of an instrument, were inadmissible when they were incompatible with the object and purpose of that instrument, as had been emphasized at the United Nations Conference on the Law of Treaties held in Vienna in 1968. Unfortunately, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties did not give sufficient guidance on the determination of admissibility of reservations. The International Law Commission had been dealing with the issue for several

years, but, ultimately, it was up to the relevant meetings of States parties to take decisions on that issue. The treaty bodies must, however, continue the consideration of reservations as part of their mandate.

19. The production of core documents was an important measure, but other ways must be found to facilitate the dialogue between States parties and the treaty bodies. The treaty monitoring system had become barely viable, in that reports were considered long after they had been submitted. Despite the significant efforts made by treaty bodies to improve their methods of work, much more needed to be done and the credibility of the system must be preserved by allowing for additional meeting time, on an exceptional basis, to reduce the existing backlog.

20. With regard to the composition of treaty bodies, although gender balance and the representation of all legal systems were important principles, they were not enshrined in the relevant treaties. It was therefore up to States parties to bear those principles in mind in nominating and voting for candidates. He was pleased that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was no longer the exclusive domain of women and hoped that, in turn, more women would be elected to other treaty bodies. Likewise, experts from all regions should be appointed to those bodies; that could make an important contribution to enhancing their collective expertise and understanding.

21. **Mr. Oh** Nak-young (Republic of Korea) said that, since its creation, the United Nations had dedicated itself to cataloguing and codifying human rights; its efforts had led to the adoption of specific international human rights and humanitarian law instruments. By adopting those instruments, the international community had expressed its collective will to promote and protect human rights. His delegation regretted that there were still many countries that were not parties to the six core human rights instruments and it supported the goal of universal ratification.

22. The treaty bodies created under the various human rights instruments had encouraged and monitored their implementation through a dialogue with State parties in the framework of reviewing national reports, individual communications or inquiries. The reporting procedure was a central element of the monitoring system for those instruments because it not only provided an opportunity for reviewing implementation measures taken at the national level but also facilitated the dissemination of universally accepted human rights standards.

23. His country was a party to the six core human rights instruments and faithfully fulfilled its reporting obligations. Its second periodic report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had been considered in May 2001 and it was currently preparing its eleventh periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and its second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

24. His delegation noted with concern that a number of problems were hindering the effective functioning of the treaty bodies, including the heavy reporting burden on States parties and the backlog of reports and communications awaiting consideration. It welcomed the efforts made by the treaty bodies to address those problems by rationalizing their methods of work, but stressed that further concerted efforts were needed on the part of the international community.

25. Lastly, his delegation emphasized the importance of human rights education, which it believed was the key to preventing human rights violations. Measures to prevent, investigate and criminalize human rights violations were most effective when the public fully appreciated their significance.

26. **Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia) said that, as soon as it had taken office, his Government had decided actively to uphold human rights and international humanitarian law within the framework of its policy of national reconciliation, and had adopted exceptional measures to that end.

27. A national centre for coordinating the campaign against illegal armed groups had been set up and a financial brigade responsible for dismantling the groups' funding networks had been created. In addition, a sweeping reform of the army was under way, aimed at modernizing it and making it more effective, and the armed forces chief of staff had been authorized to dismiss without notice any member of the armed forces suspected of human rights violations or of collaborating with illegal armed groups. In 2000, the Government had allocated nearly US$ 5 million to providing protection for human rights defenders (trade unionists, members of human rights organizations, etc.)

and their workplaces, an amount which had proved inadequate and which it had tried to supplement by requesting assistance from the international community.

28. In the legislative area the Government's human rights protection policy had taken on even greater significance. A new Military Penal Code, which provided, inter alia, that members of the armed forces who committed human rights violations must be tried by the ordinary courts and not by military courts, had entered into force and a new Penal Code which took into account the provisions of international humanitarian law had been adopted. Much remained to be done to restore civil peace, however, and until the Government made progress in securing a negotiated settlement of the armed conflict and prevailed upon illegal armed groups to respect international humanitarian law, it would be unable to enforce the population's fundamental rights. The national reconciliation policy therefore remained its top priority.

29. **Ms. Geels** (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of the CANZ group (Australia, Canada and New Zealand), as well as Chile and Norway, which associated themselves with her statement, said that the treaty body system was central to efforts to ensure universal respect for fundamental human rights and that it was necessary to tackle the problems which were preventing it from functioning properly.

30. To begin with, the burden of reporting on States parties, and the resulting burden on the treaty bodies, should be reduced by streamlining periodic reporting requirements and avoiding duplication. Reports should also be shorter and more focused. Some treaty bodies were already agreeing to the submission of consolidated reports and allowing reporting periods to be modified. Some States were also submitting timely and short thematic reports, but that trend needed to be consolidated.

31. The treaty bodies also needed to improve their working methods and their dialogue with States. It might be useful, in that context, to make more extensive use of pre-sessional working groups, establish panels to expedite the consideration of periodic reports and individual communications and harmonize rules of procedure. That, of course, meant ensuring that the treaty bodies had sufficient regular budget resources. States should also support the High Commissioner's continuing efforts to improve the servicing of the treaty body system.

32. It was important to expand technical assistance to help States fully understand their obligations and meet their periodic reporting requirements. Greater cooperation among the various treaty bodies was also important. In particular, they should use their annual meeting of chairpersons to share information and good practices and identify areas of complementarity so as to reduce duplication. In that regard, her delegation strongly supported the proposal that members of all the treaty bodies should meet to ensure coordination with respect to cross-cutting issues.

33. **Mr. Jansons** (Latvia), associated himself with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the European Union. If countries wanted to overcome their divisions and assume common responsibilities, they had to implement human rights instruments effectively. Only thus could achievements and prospects in that field form an integral part of the political, legal and moral relationship among countries. The United Nations and its specialized agencies had produced an impressive range of treaties, but national and international jurisprudence had demonstrated the limits of international law-making. The relationship between international and national law, which in the past had been a largely theoretical issue, had become an important practical problem, primarily as a result of the increasing adoption of treaties governing States' relations with their own citizens. Given that only about one third of States that had accepted an individual complaints mechanism under a human rights instrument had actually been the subject of a complaint, more should be done not only to help the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Committee on follow-up to individual communications, but also to determine what obstacles were preventing individuals from invoking the provisions of the instrument in question, whether before national courts or before the corresponding committee.

34. His Government took its commitments under human rights treaties very seriously. In 1999, it had begun a dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In 2001, it had begun a dialogue with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which had considered its initial report. However, it had disagreed with some of the observations of the latter Committee, particularly those which repeated the observations made in 1999 by the

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and which the Government had challenged.

35. His delegation commended the efforts of the treaty bodies to rationalize their methods of work, a trend which should be encouraged. In that regard, the Human Rights Committee had decided to consider some periodic reports together, even if they had been issued as separate documents, in order to reduce the backlog of reports. His delegation was pleased to note that the Human Rights Committee had included in its report (A/56/40) a list of States parties that had reports more than five years overdue or that had not submitted a report requested by a special decision of the Committee. That was a judicious approach which should be maintained in the future.

36. In a situation where national interests had become intertwined with human rights values, the implementation of human rights instruments could not remain a mere appendix to national law. In that regard, he wished to mention that Latvia was among the 33 States which had extended standing invitations to all the thematic mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights.

37. Lastly, the meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies provided a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on procedures and logistical problems; its role should therefore be expanded.

38. **Mr. Musa** (Nigeria) said that Nigeria was a party to most of the international human rights instruments and that it had just ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. His delegation was pleased to note that international conventions, covenants and treaties, particularly those relating to human rights, were being signed and ratified by an increasing number of countries. However, the mere signing of an instrument was not a guarantee that it would be implemented, and basic human rights continued to be violated daily. It was therefore necessary, in the age of globalization, to put in place a more effective and innovative system to ensure respect for human dignity, in particular by adopting a human-rights-based approach to development and ensuring that human rights were taken into consideration in all United Nations system-wide activities. While welcoming the international community's demonstration of its resolve, since the events of 11 September, to combat terrorism the Nigerian delegation pointed out the need, emphasized by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to ensure that innocent people did not become victims of the measures taken and the need always to be guided by human rights principles in the fight against terrorism and to take a proportional approach. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance had represented a milestone in the history of the United Nations. An anti-discrimination agenda had been drawn up, and the establishment of an anti-discrimination unit in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would help to implement it. In addition, landmark agreements had been reached at the Conference on making reparations for injustices committed in the past in the context of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism.

39. **Mr. Tekle** (Eritrea) said that his country, even though it had been an independent State for only a short time, had signed or acceded to almost all the human rights conventions. It observed the letter and spirit of them by submitting the periodic reports required and adhering to the procedures of the treaty bodies and monitoring mechanisms. Eritrea had also, after adopting its new Constitution, revised its civil and criminal codes in order to make them compatible with the relevant international instruments. However, the Eritrean delegation regretted the fact that existing procedures were not always applied honestly and fairly, with the result that it was becoming increasingly difficult for some States to accept them because they had become counterproductive and indeed had been turned into instruments for the violation of human rights. When the chairman and rapporteur of a working group was both judge of and a party to a case concerning a country with which his own country was at war, and was also defending his Government against similar complaints in other United Nations forums and the courts of third States, it was morally and politically legitimate to refuse to cooperate with that working group. In that context, it was urgent for the Commission on Human Rights to take appropriate measures to ensure that its subsidiary bodies respected the legacy of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments.

40. **Mr. Tessema** (Ethiopia) said that the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international conventions and various declarations on human rights laid down States' basic

obligations regarding respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ethiopia attached great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights, and its Transitional Government, soon after coming to power in 1991, had incorporated the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into the Transitional Charter. Measures had subsequently been taken to promote public awareness of international human rights instruments. The Federal Constitution, which had replaced the Transitional Charter, provided a firm basis for the establishment of a democratic order and the rule of law and for guaranteeing full respect for and enjoyment of human rights. In addition, it stipulated the direct applicability of all treaties, including the international human rights instruments to which Ethiopia was a party (15 United Nations international human rights instruments, the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their 1977 Additional Protocols, 17 ILO conventions and two African regional instruments).

41. In view of the important role played by national institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights at the national, regional and global levels, Ethiopia had recently taken legislative measures to establish the Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ethiopian Government, anxious to promote and protect women's basic rights, had adopted a national policy ensuring that women had the opportunity to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country. Moreover, in accordance with its international obligations, Ethiopia had been submitting its reports on the implementation of the rights of women and children to the relevant treaty bodies. It was preparing its reports on the implementation of other human rights instruments to which it was a party.

42. Ethiopia, which attached particular importance to education, was taking steps to promote awareness of human rights among the general public and, more specifically, among women, the police, judges and other law enforcement officials. The national curriculum now included civic education, in which human rights occupied an important place. Ethiopia had recently finalized the revision of the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure in a bid to bring them into line with the Federal Constitution.

43. The Ethiopian Government also encouraged representatives of various sectors of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations and activist groups, to participate in discussions on human rights issues, and had developed a code of conduct aimed at promoting the establishment of constructive partnerships with those sectors.

44. Despite the progress achieved, the country continued to face the problems of a shortage of trained personnel, financial constraints and a lack of national institutional capability. In that regard, his delegation recalled that the Millennium Declaration had emphasized the need to support national capacity-building so as to promote the implementation of the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights.

45. **Mr. Félix** (Dominican Republic) said that the consideration of the fourth periodic report of the Dominican Republic on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was described in the report of the Human Rights Committee (A/56/40). In that connection, he expressed satisfaction with the Committee's comments on the positive aspects that emerged from the periodic report and emphasized that, since the report's submission, his Government had provided the Committee, at its request, with additional information. As to the principal causes of concern to the Committee and its recommendations, his Government, which was genuinely democratic and committed to respect for human rights, would transmit its observations in that regard.

46. **Mr. Taran** (International Migration Branch, International Labour Organization) recalled that migrant workers and their families, who numbered some 97 million people throughout the world, were a particularly vulnerable group. They were victims of the prejudices underlying the concept of the nation State, according to which immigration was a threat to national identity, and governments often adopted an overly utilitarian approach in that regard, seeing immigration only as a means of responding selectively to the needs of the labour market depending on the cycles of economic activity. The principle of equal treatment of foreign workers had first been acknowledged in 1949 with the adoption of the ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment (revised) (No. 97), but in the 1980s there had been an upsurge of discrimination in access to employment, particularly in western Europe with the problems encountered by second-generation migrants. Within the framework of its project on "Combating discrimination

against migrant workers and ethnic minorities in the world of work", begun in 1991, ILO had found that discrimination against migrants or ethnic minorities affected as many as 35 per cent of job applications. Discrimination had an impact on the integration of immigrants, on workplace relations and productivity and on community relations. ILO was trying to encourage governments, employers and workers' organizations to take measures to combat discrimination and promote equal opportunity. The consensus that had characterized the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance had been a decisive step forward in areas in which ILO was active. Xenophobia had been recognized as a distinct phenomenon requiring concerted and specific policy responses, particularly to protect migrant workers and promote equality in the workplace, in accordance with the United Nations and ILO conventions relating to the protection of migrant workers. The need to conduct education and public information campaigns in that regard and to expand training for the public authorities concerned had also been emphasized. ILO, for its part, intended to redouble its efforts and to assist governments and social partners in taking the necessary measures to ensure that all migrants could live in dignity and enjoy equality of opportunity in a globalizing world.

Agenda item 112: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/56/L.24/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.24/Rev.1: Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

47. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, announced that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Malaysia and the United Republic of Tanzania had also become sponsors. He noted that, despite the prospects for development in the new millennium, millions of people remained on the sidelines of that process, particularly rural women, who continued to experience major difficulties even though their contribution to agricultural and rural development had been recognized by the international community. There was therefore a need to take further measures at all levels — national, regional and international — to improve their situation. In that connection, he mentioned the expert group meeting on "The situation of rural women within the context of globalization", held in Ulaanbataar in June 2001 by the Division for the Advancement of Women, with the participation of UNIFEM. The conclusions and recommendations of that meeting would enlighten all those — Member States, United Nations agencies and civil society — who would have to decide on the measures to be taken.

48. He drew attention to paragraphs 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 of the draft resolution and indicated that the subparagraphs of paragraph 6 should be read in the following order: (a), (h), (f), (d), (b), (g), (i), (e) and (c). He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

49. **The Chairman** announced that Angola and Zambia had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Agenda item 115: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/C.3/56/L.29)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.29: The girl child

50. **Mr. Shingenge** (Namibia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, announced that Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Cameroon, China, Cyprus, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, the Gambia, Iceland, Jamaica, Malta, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine had also become sponsors. He noted that Brazil had unfortunately been omitted from the list of original sponsors. The sponsors had simply updated resolution 55/78, since the special session of the General Assembly on children, the conclusions of which would have influenced the wording of the draft resolution, had been postponed. They had nevertheless felt it necessary to put forward the draft resolution, particularly since the question of the girl child seemed to be gradually disappearing from United Nations documents.

51. Pointing to the differences between the draft resolution and resolution 55/78, he said that the words "or acceding to" had been added in paragraph 2 since the Optional Protocol had now entered into force. In paragraph 21, Member States and observers were invited to ensure their representation at the Second World Congress at a high political level. Lastly, in paragraph 23, Member States, rather than the Secretary-General, were urged to integrate a gender perspective into the work of the special session on

children. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

52. **The Chairman** announced that Armenia, Cambodia, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Togo had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.